

# Early Achievers

## Participant Operating Guidelines



Adapted from National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning

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## I. Introduction:

### a. **Overview: What is Early Achievers?**

The Department of Early Learning (DEL) has developed Early Achievers, Washington's quality rating and improvement system (QRIS), to help programs offer high-quality care that supports each child's learning and development. Early Achievers is a *voluntary* program designed to:

- Support child care providers to provide high-quality care by providing resources including training, coaching and incentives
- Help parents and caregivers find high-quality child care and early learning programs that fit their needs with the help of an easy-to-understand rating system
- Ensure that children have high-quality early learning experiences that help them develop the skills they need to be successful in school and life

Early Achievers is a key strategy of the Statewide Early Learning Plan, Washington's roadmap to improving early learning so that all children can start school ready to succeed. In addition, Early Achievers is the centerpiece of Washington's Race to the Top- Early Learning Challenge grant application. In December 2011, Washington was one of nine states to win Race to the Top, a competitive federal grant designed to support states' efforts to improve early learning and development programs for young children. Washington will receive \$60 million over four years to build upon its existing early learning efforts to ensure that all children are ready for success in school and life.

Early Achievers is designed to align, support, and build upon other key early learning programs in Washington, particularly WaKIDS, Washington's Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills, and the professional development career lattice. Creating seamless programs for children and families in Washington is key to helping all children grow, develop, and successfully transition from early childhood into early elementary.

### b. **History in Washington**

Early Achievers was developed in collaboration with child care providers across the state. For two years, the Department of Early Learning (DEL) and Thrive by Five Washington worked with approximately 90 providers in five communities to test and implement elements of QRIS including coaching and program assessment. An independent evaluation of the field test found that when child care providers receive one-on-one coaching and a modest amount of money to make changes to their program, the quality of the care they give children starts to quickly increase. Through

their commitment to quality improvement and supporting children and families in their care, participants provided valuable insight and feedback to DEL that has helped shape and refine the Early Achievers model.

c. **Purpose of the Operating Guidelines**

This document is designed to:

- Help facilities understand key components of Early Achievers to ensure successful participation
- Provide a detailed overview of Early Achievers policies and expectations
- Serve as a reference tool throughout participation

While it is the facility's responsibility to read, understand and follow the guidelines in this document, your local resource and referral agency is available to work with you to answer questions or concerns, and help you successfully implement these guidelines. The term **facility** will be used throughout this document to indicate child care centers and family child care homes participating in Early Achievers.

## II. Early Achievers Partners: Roles within the System

a. **Agency Roles**

There are many organizations across the state that are critical to the success of Early Achievers, including the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges and Thrive by Five Washington Early Learning Coalitions. The following agencies are key partners in direct implementation of Early Achievers, and have distinct roles:

<b>Q (Quality)</b>	<b>All agencies promote child care quality</b>
<b>R (Rating)</b>	The <b>University of Washington</b> (UW) is the lead agency for evaluation, assessment and rating assignment. UW is also responsible for development of the Early Achievers coach framework and training.
<b>I (Improvement)</b>	<b>Child Care Aware of Washington</b> (formerly known as The Washington State Child Care Resource & Referral Network) is the lead agency for coordinating improvement activities including coaching, technical assistance, professional development and training. Regions have Regional Coordinators, who oversee implementation across the region, and local resource and referral agencies that work directly with participating facilities.
<b>S (System)</b>	<b>The Department of Early Learning</b> (DEL) is the lead administrative agency for systems development and integration.

Early Achievers expansion will happen in regions across the state, with all regions eligible to participate by July, 1, 2013. Each region has local lead resource and referral agencies that manage and coordinate local efforts, employ TA specialists and coaches, and will be your point of contact throughout participation. The term ***local lead agency*** will be used throughout this document to indicate the lead resource and referral agency responsible for Early Achievers implementation in your community.

### III. Eligibility

#### a. Facility Type

The following facility types are eligible to participate in Early Achievers:

##### i. **Licensing and certification requirements:**

- Licensed child care centers or family child care homes
- Tribal or military certification
- Head Start and ECEAP programs

##### ii. **Ages of children served:**

- Facilities must serve children between the ages of birth to five
- Facilities serving school age children *only* are not eligible to participate in Early Achievers

#### b. Child Enrollment Requirements

##### i. **During Early Achievers Registration and Level 2 participation:**

- DEL understands that enrollment can fluctuate, especially in family child care. Therefore, low enrollment will not impact a facility's eligibility to *register* for Early Achievers and begin to work on Level 2 requirements; however, facilities must ensure that there are four children enrolled before requesting an evaluation after completion of Level 2.

##### ii. **On-site evaluation:**

- There must be a minimum of four children birth to 5 enrolled and present at the time of on-site evaluation for facility rating.
- If a facility requests an evaluation and does not have four children enrolled and present during the on-site visit, the evaluation visit will be cancelled and the facility will remain a Level 2. The facility may be required to wait a minimum of one evaluation enrollment period (3 months) before they are considered eligible to receive another evaluation visit.

##### iii. **Ongoing requirements (after completion of Level 2):**



- Facilities are expected to report enrollment on a quarterly basis via the WELS Provider Portal.
- Facilities that drop below a minimum enrollment of four children are required to notify their coach (Level 3-5 facilities) or assigned TA specialist from their local lead agency (Level 2 facilities) within seven business days. Coaches or TA specialist will document enrollment challenges and work with facilities to increase enrollment.
- If a facility has **no children** enrolled for 60 calendar days, the local lead agency will initiate the termination process described in *Participation Requirements and Expectations: Criteria for Termination* (Section 8: part f).

c. **Licensing Status**

i. **Requirements: definition of good standing for participation:**

- Facilities must be in **good standing** with licensing in order to participate in Early Achievers defined as having an active license that is **not** suspended, revoked or on probationary status.

ii. **How licensing status affects registration and participation:**

- **Initial License**
  - **Registration:** Facilities that hold an initial license may register to participate in Early Achievers and can begin to complete Level 2 requirements. However the facility cannot submit the Early Achievers Application for Level 2 to achieve Level 2 status, or request an evaluation for facility rating, until they receive a full license. If the facility has not received a full license within the year allotted for completion of Level 2 activities (defined in *Section VI: part e*), the facility will be terminated from Early Achievers. Facilities may reapply to Early Achievers, but must have a full license before they can achieve Level 2 status and request an evaluation.
- **Suspension & Revocation**
  - **Registration:** Facilities with a license that is revoked or suspended may **not register to participate in Early Achievers.**
  - **During participation:** If the facility license becomes revoked or suspended while enrolled in Early Achievers, the facility will be immediately terminated from Early Achievers, regardless of facility rating. All activities related to Early Achievers will also be terminated.

- **Future participation:** The facility may reapply for participation after one year from the date of termination following the procedures outlined in *Participant Requirements and Expectations: Reapplication to Early Achievers* (Section 8: part i). In order to be eligible to reapply for participation in Early Achievers, the facility must not be in a suspended, revoked or probationary status. In the case that a summary suspension is rescinded and a full license is restored, the facility may reapply to Early Achievers as soon as the full license is restored.
- **Probationary License**
  - **Registration:** Facilities that hold a probationary license may register to participate in Early Achievers and begin to complete Level 2 activities. However, facilities cannot achieve submit the Early Achievers Application for Level 2 to achieve Level 2 status, or request an evaluation for facility rating until the probationary license status is reinstated to a full license.
  - **During completion of Level 2 requirements:** If a facility is issued a probationary license **during** completion of Level 2, the facility may continue Level 2 participation. However, facilities cannot submit the Early Achievers Application for Level 2 to achieve Level 2 status, or request an evaluation for facility rating until the probationary license status is reinstated to a full license. If the facility license has not been reinstated to a full license within the year allotted for completion of Level 2 activities (defined in *Section VI: part e*), the facility will be terminated from Early Achievers. The facility may reapply for participation after one year from the date of termination following the procedures outlined in *Participant Requirements and Expectations: Reapplication to Early Achievers* (Section 8: part i). In order to be eligible to reapply for participation in Early Achievers, the facility must not be in a suspended, revoked or probationary status.
  - **After rating:** If a facility is issued a probationary license during Early Achievers Level 3-5 participation, the facility will be allowed to continue to receive coaching from assigned coach in partnership with the facility licensor. The coach will meet regularly with facility licensor to ensure that all support given to facility during the probation period focuses on reinstatement of a full license. In the case that a facility is rated a Level 2 and therefore does not have an assigned coach, the facility may receive

technical assistance. All technical assistance provided during the probation period must focus on the reinstatement of a full license. To remain in Early Achievers, the facility's license must be reinstated as a full license within six months of the date the facility's license was initially placed on probationary status. If the facility's probationary license is not reinstated as a full license within 6 months, the facility's participation in Early Achievers will be terminated. Facilities terminated from Early Achievers due to probationary license may reapply to Early Achievers after one year from the date of termination following the procedures outlined in *Participant Requirements and Expectations: Reapplication to Early Achievers* (Section 8: part i). In order to be eligible to reapply for participation in Early Achievers, the facility must not be in a suspended, revoked or probationary status.

## IV. Early Achievers Quality Standards

### a. Overview

Early Achievers, Washington's quality rating and improvement system (QRIS), provides a common set of expectations and standards to define and measure the quality of early learning settings. The Early Achievers Quality Standards promote and support comprehensive facility quality and help ensure that quality practices are having direct impact on individual children's progress. The Department of Early Learning (DEL) and the University of Washington (UW) developed the standards based on learnings from a QRIS field test.

All licensed and certified early learning settings are included in the framework, though participation is voluntary: licensing or certification is the foundation of Early Achievers and is considered Level 1; programs that choose to participate in Early Achievers earn rating Levels 2 through 5 based on participation and evaluation. The following section describes the structure of the rating system, what the rating levels mean, and how facilities earn ratings.

### b. Rating Structure

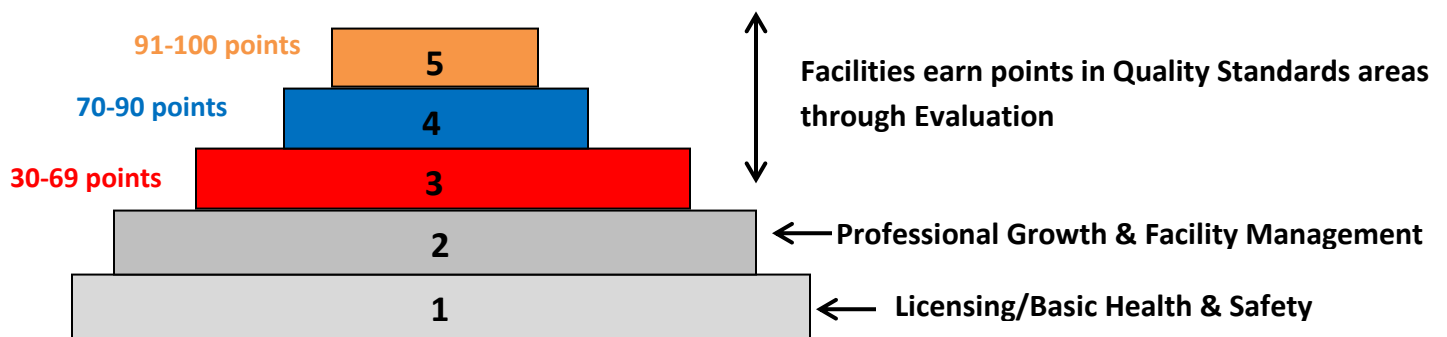
Quality Rating Improvement Systems (QRIS) across the nation use the following approaches to create ratings:

- **Building Block Approach:** Facilities must meet every component of each standard in each level before moving to the next level

- **Point System Approach:** Facilities earn points in quality standard areas and rating is based on total cumulative points
- **Hybrid Approach:** A combination of building block and points system approaches; requires that all facilities meet the same basic foundational quality, while allowing for facilities to achieve additional points based on program strengths, philosophy, approach, etc.

Early Achievers is a hybrid model, meaning that all participating facilities share the same basic foundational quality at Levels 1 and 2, and earn points to achieve Levels 3-5.

<b>Level 1</b>	Licensing or certification that includes child care centers and family child care, military, tribal, Head Start and ECEAP programs. Early Achievers is a voluntary program and facilities must register to participate. No facilities will be automatically enrolled in Early Achievers and facilities that choose not to participate will not be publically identified as Level 1.
<b>Level 2</b>	Level 2 is considered <i>Professional Growth and Facility Management</i> and is designed to help facilities understand Early Achievers, the Quality Standards and program requirements, and the child outcome and school readiness goals of the system. Program leaders (child care center directors and family child care primary providers) complete a series of activities to prepare the facility for successful participation and evaluation including training, self-assessment and participation in MERIT.
<b>Level 3</b>	Upon completion of Level 2, facilities earn points based on evaluation on four Quality Standards: Child Outcomes; Curriculum, Learning Environments, & Interactions; Professional Development & Training; and Family Engagement & Partnership.
<b>Level 4</b>	
<b>Level 5</b>	



c. **Quality Standards/Components**

The Early Achievers Quality Standards (Appendix A) focus on achieving positive child outcomes for each child in care. There are four ***Quality Standard*** areas:

1. **Child Outcomes**
2. **Facility Curriculum & Learning Environment & Interactions**
3. **Professional Development & Training**
4. **Family Engagement & Partnership**

Each Quality Standard area is made up of several ***components***, which describe specific ways in which a facility may demonstrate quality within the Quality Standard area. For example, “*Developmental Screening is conducted within 90 days of enrollment and results are shared with parents*” is one component within the Child Outcomes Quality Standard area.

The following table provides *general* examples of the types of facility practices that the Quality Standards measure in each area. Please refer to the Early Achievers Quality Standards Framework for specific components.

Quality Standard Area	Examples of how facilities earn points in this Standard Area:
<b>Child Outcomes</b> (10 points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Screen children to spot developmental concerns</li> <li>• Provide ongoing assessment to learn about each child’s strengths and needs</li> <li>• Share information about children’s growth and progress with families to promote school readiness</li> <li>• Use information about each child’s strengths and needs to plan activities and curriculum</li> </ul>
<b>Curriculum &amp; Learning Environment &amp; Interactions</b> (70 points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Environment Rating Scales (ERS) Assessment:</b> measures availability and variety of learning materials and activities; organization of space, materials, schedule and routine to enhance learning; interactions between children and providers; use of materials to promote learning</li> <li>• <b>Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) Assessment:</b> measures how providers interact with children to create supportive, nurturing relationships, enhance learning, and provide instruction</li> <li>• Implement a curriculum that aligns with the Washington State Early Learning and Development Guidelines and supports child development and individualized instruction</li> <li>• Provide planning time and supports for staff for professional growth and learning</li> </ul>

Quality Standard Area	Examples of how facilities earn points in this Standard Area:
<b>Professional Development &amp; Training</b> (10 points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Child care center director/family child care primary provider/teaching staff have qualifications that align with the education levels identified in the Washington State Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals, from a Child Development Associate continuing through the Master's or higher degree level</li> </ul>
<b>Family Engagement &amp; Partnership</b> (10 points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete and implement research-based Strengthening Families Framework.</li> <li>Provide resources to families such as parenting programs, and information about community resources</li> <li>Partner with families to support children's progress</li> </ul>

d. **ERS and CLASS**

i. **Description of assessment tools:**

Early Achievers incorporates two standardized program assessments as part of the Quality Standards: the **Environment Rating Scales (ERS)** and the **Classroom Observation Scoring System (CLASS)**. The ERS and CLASS measure classroom/family child care home quality and focus on the different types of supports available to children. While both tools measure the quality of children's experiences, each focuses on different elements in the environment. Use of both tools therefore provides a comprehensive assessment of facility quality.

**Environment Ratings Scales (ERS):**

- Measures classroom/family child care home quality of the environment, including how the available materials, activities, routines, schedules, and interactions support learning. The ERS is scored on a 1-7 continuum, with 7 considered excellent and 1 considered inadequate.
- Consists of sets of scales for different settings and ages of children. The following scales are used in Early Achievers:
  - Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale (**ITERS**)--center classrooms serving children birth to 2 ½ years
  - Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (**ECERS**)--center classrooms serving children ages 2 ½ to 5

- Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale (**FCCERS**)--family child care homes

**Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS):**

- Measures the quality of interactions between providers and children. CLASS is scored on a 1-7 continuum, with 6-7 considered high, 3-5 medium, and 1-2 low. CLASS looks at the following areas, or *domains*:
  - **Emotional Support & Classroom Organization/Emotional & Behavioral Support:** warm and respectful relationships, responsive caregivers, awareness of children’s needs, proactive behavior management, and organized routines that maximize learning time and children’s involvement.
  - **Instructional Support/Engaged Support for Learning:** discussion and activities that encourage development of children’s reasoning and logic skills, frequent conversations with open-ended questions and advanced language, use of children’s past knowledge and understanding to build upon and increase learning, and active and engaged children.

**ii. Minimum thresholds:**

A facility must achieve designated minimum CLASS and ERS scores in order to achieve a rating of Level 3, regardless of total facility points scored. Each assessed classroom/family child care home must score at least a 2 on Instructional Support/Engaged Support for Learning in the CLASS, a 3.5 on Emotional Support and Classroom Organization/Emotional and Behavioral Support, and a 4 on the ERS. These scores, or ***minimum thresholds*** represent the foundational level of quality that all facilities must have in order to be rated Levels 3-5. Facilities that do not meet the minimum thresholds will receive a rating of Level 2, regardless of total facility points earned.

**e. How the Quality Standards are “weighted”**

Although facilities have flexibility in how they achieve points towards ratings, one Quality Standard area, Facility Curriculum & Learning Environment & Interactions, represents the most total points (70 out of 100) of the four standard areas. Within Facility Curriculum & Learning Environment & Interactions, ERS and CLASS scores make up 55% of a facility rating, with 40% determined by CLASS scores and 15% from ERS. The CLASS score makes up a significant portion of overall facility rating in order to recognize the importance and long term benefit of positive social and instructional interactions.



## V. Early Achievers Supports and Incentives

### a. Overview

The quality improvement component of Early Achievers includes a range of supports and incentives to assist participants with quality improvement efforts throughout their participation. Supports in early stages of Early Achievers (Level 2) focus on director-level training and technical assistance to increase successful Early Achievers participation and evaluation readiness. After a facility receives an on-site evaluation and rating, a package of supports is available to facilities that achieve rating Levels 3 through 5. All supports in Levels 3 through 5 are intended to support facilities to implement goals based on evaluation results, increase assessment scores, and ultimately increase facility quality.

### b. Level 2 Supports

#### i. **Technical Assistance:**

Technical Assistance is available to participants through their local resource and referral agencies. Technical Assistance (TA) specialists can help participants navigate Early Achievers Level 2 and provide support in a number of areas including ERS and CLASS readiness, evaluation preparation, and how to access and apply required trainings.

Upon registration for Early Achievers in MERIT, facilities will be assigned a TA specialist by their local lead agency to support them as they move through Level 2 requirements. The TA specialist will work with the child care center director/family child care primary provider to develop a work plan and timeline for moving through Level 2. The work plan will identify specific required activities of Level 2 as well as optional training and resources to help the facility meet the Early Achievers Quality Standards.

TA specialists will meet with programs at specific intervals in the Level 2 process. These visits include but are not limited to: upon acceptance into Early Achievers; upon completion of the required Level 2 Professional Training Series; and in preparation for evaluation for facility rating. In addition to the scheduled on-site visits, TA specialists will also provide consultation via phone and email.

**TA specialists are mandatory reporters under Washington State Law, and as such any instances of suspected child abuse and neglect must be reported directly to Child Protective Services.**



**ii. Training:**

The Professional Training Series described in *Moving Through Level 2/entrance to completion: Professional Training Series* (Section 6: part d) is available to participating child care center directors and family child care (FCC) primary providers free of charge and includes STARS hours. The trainings provide background and context for key elements of the Quality Standards, and are designed to prepare facilities for successful participation in Early Achievers.

**c. Coaching**

**i. Background:**

Coaching is foundational to Washington's QRIS. In the QRIS field test, coaching was found to be a highly effective method of improving the quality in child care settings, and participants reported that their relationships with coaches were key to their professional growth and quality improvement progress<sup>1</sup>. Coaching remains a central element of the Early Achievers model. Coaches are highly trained early learning professionals with experience and education in early childhood education, and participate in ongoing professional development and consultation with the University of Washington.

**ii. Role of Coach:**

All Level 3 through 5 facilities will be assigned an Early Achievers coach by the local lead agency. The role of the coach is to help facilities:

- Identify goals and make plans to achieve goals
- Access resources
- Implement quality improvements
- Navigate Early Achievers

The Early Achievers rating is a measure of *facility* quality, rather than specific classroom quality, so coaches and directors/FCC primary providers will work together to best allocate coaching resources across the facility to different teaching staff. The total amount of coaching that a facility receives will be flexible and vary based on the areas of need identified in the facility Quality Improvement Plan. Coaches *partner* with participants through the quality improvement process; the facility is ultimately *responsible* for implementing and maintaining positive changes.

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<sup>1</sup>The Seeds to Success Modified Field Test: Findings from the Impact and Implementation Studies (Boller, et al. 2010) [http://www.mathematica-mpr.com/publications/PDFs/EarlyChildhood/seeds\\_to\\_success\\_mft.pdf](http://www.mathematica-mpr.com/publications/PDFs/EarlyChildhood/seeds_to_success_mft.pdf)

Upon coach assignment, the coach will provide the director/FCC primary provider with a coach/participant contract which will outline how the coach and facility will work together. In an effort to maintain individual privacy, information shared with coaches regarding a specific child in their care shall remain confidential; however facility reports and Early Achievers documentation are subject to public disclosure law as described in *Participation Requirements and Expectations: Information Sharing* (Section 8: part c).

**Coaches are mandatory reporters under Washington State Law, and as such any instances of suspected child abuse and neglect must be reported directly to Child Protective Services.**

iii. **Quality Improvement Plan:**

Participants set goals with their coaches based on facility evaluation results, including assessment scores from ERS and CLASS, components of the Quality Standards, and overall facility rating. These goals make up the facility **Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)**. Coaches support participants to review and apply evaluation data to develop a QIP that address program gaps and areas of growth identified by evaluation results. The QIP acts as a “roadmap” for the ongoing quality improvement process, and will guide the work of the facility and the coach.

Participants and coaches create QIPs together—coaches approve final QIPs and enter them into the WELS data system. Participants can access and review completed QIPs through the Provider Portal in WELS (described in Section 5: part g).

d. **Professional Development Scholarships**

Scholarships in the form of Washington Scholarships and Early Achievers Opportunity Grants are available to support participants’ ongoing professional development goals. Scholarships are awarded to individuals, not facilities, but employment at an Early Achievers facility will be tied to scholarship eligibility as outlined below.

i. **Washington Scholarships:**

Washington Scholarships is administered by Child Care Aware of Washington and supports educators working towards their CDA (Child Development Associate), ECE Certificate, AA/AAS degree in Early Childhood Education, and BA degree.

Washington Scholarships also offers CDA Assessment Scholarships once students have completed CDA coursework. Beginning in 2014, access to Washington Scholarships will be determined based on employment at an Early Achievers facility. Participants interested in Washington Scholarships should contact Child Care Aware of Washington.

ii. **Early Achievers Opportunity Grants:**

Opportunity Grants are administered by the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges, and were created to help low-income adults complete statewide certificates, statewide credentials and Associate Degrees while increasing job skills and knowledge. Eligibility for Early Achievers Opportunity Grants is based on employment at an Early Achievers facility. Participants interested in Early Achiever Opportunity Grants should contact their local community or technical college.

e. **Quality Improvement Awards**

Quality Improvement Awards are awarded to facilities that achieve ratings Levels 3 through 5. Quality Improvement (QI) Awards recognize achievement and support facilities to implement quality improvement goals.

i. **Award eligibility:**

To be eligible to receive QI Awards, facilities must:

- Achieve an Early Achievers rating of Level 3, 4 or 5
- Be an eligible Early Achievers participant as defined in *Eligibility* (Section 3)
- Create a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) with assigned coach
- Attain coach approval of QIP

ii. **Award amounts:**

*The amount for Early Achievers quality improvement awards for family home child care providers is considered a mandatory subject of bargaining with SEIU 925. The state is currently in the process of bargaining the award amounts for family home child care providers with SEIU 925. The monetary amount of each award is pending.*

iii. **Purpose of award funds:**

All QI Award funds must be used towards achievement of quality improvement goals outlined on coach-approved, facility QIP and must align with the Early Achievers Quality Standards framework.

iv. **Allowable uses:**

Award funds may **only** be used in the following categories:

- **Learning Environment Materials:** QI Awards may be used to purchase developmentally appropriate classroom/program materials. Examples of acceptable items include but are not limited to: materials, educational toys, and equipment to support learning and basic routines.
- **Curriculum and Assessment Materials:** QI Awards may be used to strengthen and enhance the facility's curriculum and capacity to document individual

children's growth and development. Examples of acceptable items include but are not limited to: curriculum guides and reference books; observation and assessment tools; and other resources that supplement the curriculum.

- **Family Engagement and Partnership Materials**: QI Awards may be used to strengthen and enhance the facility's work with families. Examples of acceptable items include but are not limited to: parent education resources and training materials; program materials to create a welcoming environment for families; and social/educational gatherings/events for families.
- **Staff Development**: Facilities may allocate funds to the purpose of staff development in the following areas:
  - **Extra service pay**: This includes funds for staff to engage in quality improvement activities that are beyond the normal scope of work. Examples include but are not limited to: substitute pay, out of classroom planning time for lead teachers, and participation in family partnership activities. Grant funds are not intended to supplant staff salaries and should not fund in full teacher, assistant director, or director salaries.
  - **Professional development**: this includes funds for trainings, conferences and on-site staff trainings. Note: funds may be used for registration/ tuition/materials only, and may not be used for travel, hotel or related attendance expenses. Facilities should first exhaust other sources for professional development support including Washington Association for the Education of Young Children (WAEYC) before accessing QI Grants.

v. **Restrictions:**

Award funds may **not** be used to purchase items considered to be:

- **Capital Improvements**: From the Child Care and Development Fund: "No funds shall be expended for the purchase or improvement of land, or for the purchase, construction, or permanent improvement of any building or facility. However, funds may be expended for minor remodeling, and for upgrading child care facilities to assure providers meet State and local child care standards, including applicable health and safety requirements."
- **Religious Activities**: From the Child Care and Development Fund: "Funds provided under grants or contracts to providers may not be expended for any sectarian purpose or activity, including sectarian worship or instruction."
- **Gift Cards**: Grant funds should not be used to purchase monetary equivalents such as gift cards, gift certificates, traveler's checks, money orders, or the like.

vi. **Documentation and reporting:**

Facilities that receive Early Achievers QI Award funds are required to:

- Complete and submit an annual report to their local lead agency using a DEL-created template detailing how QI Awards were spent.
- Keep all documentation including records, receipts, and paperwork related to spending of QI Awards on-site for a minimum of seven years.

DEL and the facility local lead agency will conduct audits of QI Award expenditures and tracking for randomly selected facilities and for facilities that are suspected to have made fraudulent use of funds.

vii. **Fraudulent use of funds:**

Fraudulent use of QI Award funds will result in immediate termination from Early Achievers as outlined in *Participation Requirements and Expectations* (Section 8).

Fraudulent use of funds is defined as: use of funds for any purchases **not** included in *Allowable Use of Funds*; use of funds for any purchases included in *Restrictions*; and use of funds for purposes **not** related to coach-approved facility QIP.

f. **Tiered reimbursement**

DEL is currently in discussion to create a tiered reimbursement structure for licensed child care centers and family child care providers within Early Achievers so that child care subsidies are tied to quality early learning programs. Implementation of tiered reimbursement would mean that facilities that are Early Achievers participants would receive higher subsidy amounts at higher rating Levels. Tiered reimbursement for family child care providers is considered a mandatory subject of bargaining with SEIU 925.

g. **MERIT and WELS**

Early Achiever participants will use the MERIT and WELS databases to track and access information about their participation.

i. **MERIT**

MERIT (Washington's Managed Education and Registry Information Tool) is an online tool used to document and recognize the professional achievements of early care & education and school-age professionals in the State of Washington. Participants will use MERIT to:

- Create a Facility Registration and professional record
- Access the Early Achievers Registration and Application for Level 2
- Access Level 2 activities
- Track facility completion of Level 2 activities
- Document staff education qualifications for facility rating

**ii. WELS**

WELS (Web-based Early Learning System) is the data system for Early Achievers and holds information about coaching and evaluation. Facilities will access WELS through a “Provider Portal” to:

- View Early Achievers Rating Report
- View Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) and track progress
- Complete Level 2 self-assessment (link to self-assessment available in Early Achievers Application for Level 2)
- Access resources and video content

**VI. Moving through Level 2**

**a. Level 2 Overview**

Early Achievers Level 2 is designated for *Professional Growth and Facility Management* and requires facility leadership (family child care primary provider/child care center director) to complete a series of Early Achievers preparation activities and training. Upon DEL approval of completion of Level 2 requirements (via Application for Level 2 in MERIT), the facility will achieve Level 2 status and be eligible to request an evaluation for facility rating.

Early Achievers is expanding in regions across the state over a one year period (July 2012 – July 2013). Therefore, access to the Early Achievers Orientation, Early Achievers Registration, and Application for Level 2 in MERIT described below will become available to facilities as their region becomes eligible.

**b. Primary and Secondary QRIS Contacts**

The child care center director/family child care primary provider will be designated the *Primary QRIS Contact* and is responsible for oversight and completion of all Level 2 activities. In facilities where there are multiple administrative staff, the director may appoint a *Secondary QRIS Contact* such as a Program Supervisor to support participation and complete the Professional Training Series described below. In this section, *Primary QRIS Contact* will refer to the facility child care center director or family child care primary provider who has registered for Early Achievers.

**c. Getting Started**

**i. MERIT**

Facility use of MERIT is a requirement for Early Achievers participation. The Primary QRIS Contact will access the Early Achievers Registration and all Level 2 activities



through MERIT. MERIT will track and provide evidence of facility completion of Level 2 activities. Before a facility can access the Early Achievers Registration in MERIT:

- Child care center director/family child care(FCC) primary provider must have a professional record in MERIT
- Director/FCC primary provider must complete a Facility Registration in MERIT and list themselves as the current director/FCC primary provider for the facility

## **ii. Early Achievers Orientation**

The first step of participation in Early Achievers is director/FCC primary provider attendance at an Early Achievers Orientation. Monthly orientations will be held in each region and will provide information about the requirements, benefits and available resources for Early Achievers participants. Orientation attendance is required before a facility can register for Early Achievers in MERIT. Facilities interested in orientation can contact their local lead agency to register for a local orientation or visit the Department of Early Learning website to view a list of dates and locations across the state.

## **iii. Early Achievers Participation Agreement**

The Primary QRIS Contact must sign an Early Achievers Participation Agreement in order to participate in Early Achievers. The Early Achievers Participation Agreement is an agreement between the participating facility and their local lead agency, and outlines the requirements and responsibilities of Early Achievers participation. Interested participants will receive an Early Achievers Participation Agreement at the Early Achievers Orientation. Participants will return signed agreements to their local lead agency, and keep a copy of the signed agreement on-site.

## **iv. Early Achievers Registration**

After Early Achievers Orientation attendance, a director/FCC primary provider who has completed the steps described above will have access to the Early Achievers Registration by accessing the Early Achievers page on his/her provider tab in MERIT. The Early Achievers Registration includes:

- Basic facility information and demographics
- A link to the Early Achievers Operating Guidelines (this document). Applicants must check off that they have read and agreed to the Early Achievers Operating Guidelines before submitting registration. Submission of the Early Achievers Registration is completed with an electronic signature by the applicant.

Upon submission of Early Achievers Registration, the facility Primary QRIS Contact will receive an *Early Achievers Registration Confirmation* email from DEL. The facility is now considered an **Early Achievers Level 2 participant**.

d. **Completion of Required Activities**

The Primary QRIS Contact must first receive an *Early Achievers Registration Confirmation* in order to gain access to the Early Achievers Application for Level 2 in MERIT. The Early Achievers Application for Level 2 is ongoing and multi-part. It collects facility information and tracks completion of each of the following Level 2 requirements:

- **Staff Professional Records in MERIT**
- **Facility Profile**
- **Professional Training Series**
- **Facility Self-Assessment**

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i. **Staff professional records in MERIT:**

The Primary QRIS Contact must ensure that all facility staff have entered professional records in MERIT. In addition, staff should submit Education Applications and documents to MERIT for review and verification during this stage, as MERIT will serve as the source of evidence during evaluation for staff education qualifications for facility Professional Development & Training Standard points.

ii. **Facility Profile:**

The Primary QRIS Contact will complete the Facility Profile, which is a series of four open-ended reflective questions about facility management practices. The content of the answers will not be judged by DEL based on “right” answers; rather, the profile is intended to prompt facilities to reflect on how their current practices can support successful Early Achievers participation and ongoing quality improvement efforts.

iii. **Professional Training Series:**

- **Overview:** The Professional Training Series consists of **six** core trainings that are completed online or in-person depending on the training. Trainings are offered free of charge to the Primary QRIS Contact and will provide STARS hours.
- **Who is required to attend:** The Primary QRIS Contact is responsible for attendance at all six trainings. In the case that a facility has appointed a Secondary QRIS Contact such as a Program Supervisor, the Secondary QRIS Contact may complete the trainings on behalf of the facility. In this case, the



Secondary QRIS Contact must complete all six trainings. The Primary QRIS Contact will remain responsible for all other Level 2 requirements.

- **List of trainings:**

- **Online trainings:**

- Introduction to the Environment Rating Scales (ERS) and Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) Overview<sup>2</sup>
    - Introduction to the Washington State Early Learning and Development Guidelines
    - Introduction to the Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals

- **In-person trainings:**

- Introduction to Cultural Competence
    - QRIS Strengthening Families Training for Early Learning Professionals
    - QRIS School Readiness

- **Order of training series:** The Introduction to the ERS/CLASS Overview must be completed before a facility can access the facility self-assessment. The QRIS School Readiness training should be completed as the final training in the series, because it pulls information from all of the trainings together. Other trainings in the series may be completed in an order determined by the facility. However, in-person trainings will be offered on a calendar schedule, so facilities will need to plan attendance based on availability

iv. **Facility self-assessment:**

The Primary QRIS Contact will access and complete the facility self-assessment through the Early Achievers Application for Level 2 in MERIT. The purpose of facility self-assessment is to:

- Promote reflection about current practice
- Build familiarity with the assessments and standards used in Early Achievers
- Gauge readiness to request evaluation

While the self-assessment *scores* will not be used by DEL or UW to approve facility evaluation request, the facility is strongly encouraged to complete assessments as accurately and thoroughly as able and use the scores to prepare for evaluation. The

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<sup>2</sup> Facilities that were 2011-2012 Early Adopters are not required to take the Introduction to ERS and CLASS Overview training

facility must complete the ERS/CLASS Overview training in order to gain access to the self-assessment in MERIT. The self-assessment contains two parts:

- **Environment Rating Scales (ERS):** Classroom/family child care home assessment that looks at the materials and practices in the environment that support children. Child care centers are required to complete at least one ERS per age group (Infant/Toddler-ITERS; Preschool-ECERS); however, it is *recommended* that centers complete ERS for each classroom that serves children birth to 5, as the facility will not be notified in advance of which classrooms will be assessed by the evaluators.
- **Washington Quality Rating Standards:** Facility-level assessment based on components of the Early Achievers Quality Standards.

e. **Time limits for Facility Completion of Level 2 Requirements**

i. **Length of time allowed to complete requirements:**

Facilities have **one year** from the time of DEL confirmation of Early Achievers Registration to complete all Level 2 requirements.

ii. **Request for extension:**

Facilities may request a **6 month extension** to remain an Early Achiever participant and finish Level 2 activities. Facilities can request an extension by sending an email to the DEL QRIS inbox with the subject line: ***Request for Level 2 Extension***. Extensions will not be granted without a facility request. Facilities will receive email confirmation from DEL that their level 2 application period has been by extended 6 months.

iii. **Consequences of failure to complete requirements within time frame:**

A facility's Level 2 participation will expire when:

- Facility does not complete Level 2 requirements within one year and does not request extension
- Facility is granted a 6 month extension and does not complete Level 2 requirements within extended time

The Primary QRIS Contact will receive notification from DEL that the facility is no longer an active Early Achievers participant.

iv. **Reapplication to Early Achievers after time expiration:**

If a facility becomes inactive due to time expiration, the facility may reapply for Level 2 participation by re-submitting the Early Achievers Registration in MERIT. All prior facility application information and training attendance will remain in the system. The facility will be required to update and verify all facility information. In the case that

the Primary QRIS Contact has left the facility, the newly designated Primary QRIS Contact will be required to attend Early Achievers Orientation and complete the Professional Training Series.

f. **Staff Change before completion of Level 2**

i. **Primary QRIS Contact:**

If the Primary QRIS Contact leaves the facility during Level 2 completion and before facility achievement of Level 2 status:

- The facility must designate a new Primary QRIS Contact to assume responsibility for oversight and completion of Level 2 requirements by completing a new facility registration and accessing the Early Achievers application in MERIT.
- The new Primary QRIS Contact is *required* to complete all six trainings in the Professional Training Series. It is recommended that the new Primary QRIS Contact also attend Early Achievers Orientation.

In the case that the facility has a Secondary QRIS Contact that completed the Professional Training Series **and** is still employed at the facility, the new Primary QRIS Contact will not be required to complete the Professional Training Series.

ii. **Secondary QRIS Contact:**

If the Secondary QRIS Contact leaves the facility during Level 2 completion:

- If Secondary QRIS Contact was designated training participant in QRIS Application, all six trainings will need to be taken by Primary QRIS Contact or by newly designated Secondary QRIS Contact.
- If Secondary QRIS Contact was not the designated training participant no action is needed.

iii. **Facility information:**

The facility Early Achievers Registration and Application will remain active in MERIT regardless of staff change. Thus, facility information including demographics and program information, Facility Profile, self-assessment, and staff professional records will remain in the system and are not required to be entered again.

g. **Staff Change after Completion of Level 2**

If the Primary QRIS Contact leaves the facility *after* the facility has achieved Level 2 status, the facility will not be required to redo Level 2 activities. However, it is the responsibility of the facility to ensure that new leadership staff is informed of facility participation status and is equipped to participate in Early Achievers. It is recommended

that new directors attend an Early Achievers orientation. The new director is also required to submit a new facility registration application in MERIT.

h. **Achievement of Early Achievers Level 2 Status**

Upon completion of all Level 2 requirements, facilities will apply for and achieve Level 2 status as outlined below.

i. **Submission and Review of Application for Level 2:**

Upon completion of Level 2 requirements, the Primary QRIS Contact will submit the Early Achievers Application for Level 2 in MERIT. The Application cannot be submitted until all requirements are complete as indicated in MERIT. Upon submission, facilities will receive an email confirmation from DEL stating that Early Achievers Application for Level 2 has been received and is in the process of review.

ii. **Notification of Level 2 status:**

Upon application approval, facilities will receive an email from DEL stating that application has been approved and that facility has been awarded **Early Achievers Level 2 status**. If an application was not approved, DEL will provide the reasons for denial and steps that a facility can take to address issues. Facility rating Level is not posted publically at this stage of participation.

i. **Facilities that remain Level 2**

i. **Scenarios:**

Upon completion of Level 2 requirements, facilities may remain a Level 2 in the following scenarios:

- Facility chooses to remain a Level 2 (no evaluation)
- Facility does not request an evaluation within one year of achievement of Level 2 status and is automatically assigned a Level 2 rating by DEL
- Facility participates in on-site evaluation and is awarded a Level 2 rating because facility does not meet minimum thresholds for Levels 3 through 5

ii. **Publication of Level 2 Ratings:**

Facility ratings will be publically posted for Level 2 facilities in the above scenarios following the procedures outline in as described in *Evaluation and Rating: Rating Assignment* (Section 7: part f).

iii. **Responsibilities of facilities that remain Level 2:**

Level 2 facilities as described in the above scenarios are required to access the Early Achievers page on the provider tab in MERIT to:

- Submit an annual facility update by accessing the Early Achievers page on their provider tab in MERIT to confirm that the facility is still an active participant
- Complete and submit annual ERS and Washington Quality Standards Self-Assessments
- In the future facilities may be required to take additional training as part of the Professional Training Series

## **VII. Evaluation and Rating**

### **a. Overview**

On-site evaluation based on the Early Achievers Quality Standards is conducted by the University of Washington (UW) in order to assign facility ratings. The UW evaluation team includes raters and Community Liaisons as described below. Participation in evaluation is a requirement to achieve rating Levels 3, 4, and 5. The following section describes the process to request and participate in evaluation, how evaluation data is used to create a facility rating, and how ratings are distributed and posted.

### **b. Request for evaluation**

#### **i. Eligibility:**

In order to be eligible to request an evaluation for rating, facilities must:

- Complete all Level 2 requirements and be awarded Level 2 status by DEL
- Have a minimum of four children enrolled and present at the time of on-site evaluation

#### **ii. Failure to request an evaluation:**

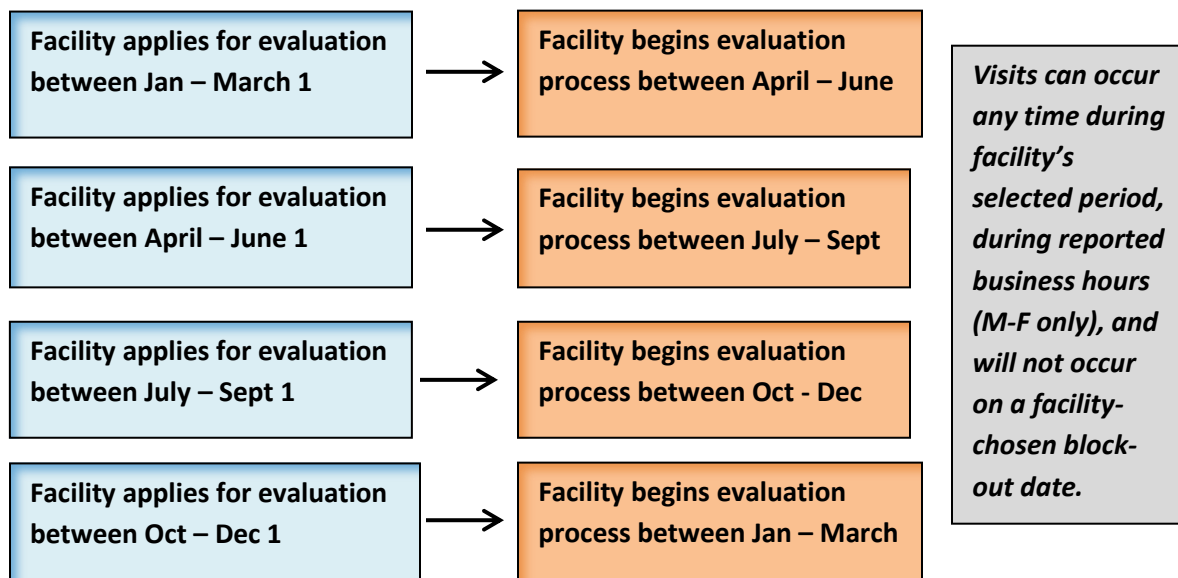
Facilities have one year from the date of achievement of Level 2 status to request an evaluation. Facilities that do not submit a request for evaluation after one year will be automatically assigned a rating of Level 2 which will be publically posted as described in *Evaluation and Rating: Rating Assignment* (Section 7: part f). Facilities that are assigned a rating of Level 2 without evaluation may choose to request an evaluation at a later time or remain a Level 2 as described in *Moving through Level 2: Facilities that remain a Level 2* (Section 6: part i).

#### **iii. Process to submit request for evaluation:**

Facilities will complete and submit a request for evaluation in MERIT. The request for evaluation will include normal facility operating hours and days of the week. Facilities will choose an evaluation period, or a three month “window” of time in which to begin the evaluation process. Facilities will have an option to indicate “block-out” dates that the facility is not available within the selected window due to holiday closures, field trips, etc. In the case that a facility does not operate during

the summer months and applies for evaluation between April and June, the facility will have an option to choose the October through December evaluation period.

Evaluation Periods<sup>3</sup>:



iv. **Approval of evaluation request**

When a facility submits a request for evaluation in MERIT, the Regional Coordinator from the facility's region will be notified. The Regional Coordinator will contact the facility and conduct a consultation to determine readiness for evaluation. The consultation will include a series of key questions using the facility-completed Rating Readiness Tool (described below in *Evaluation Preparation: Rating Readiness Tool*). These key questions will help Regional Coordinators and facilities determine if the facility is likely to meet a rating of Level 3 or above. **Regional Coordinators do not predict or guarantee facility rating.** Rather, the purpose of the Regional Coordinator consultation is to ensure that the facility has the *minimum* in place required for a successful on-site evaluation visit.

<sup>3</sup>Request for evaluation must be approved by Regional Coordinator before facility is referred UW for evaluation. If request for reevaluation is not initially approved and facility has to complete additional steps, the facility evaluation period may be bumped to a later period. In addition, in the case of higher than anticipated evaluation request volumes, the evaluation team may be required to assign the facility to a later period.

If the Regional Coordinator determines that the facility is ready to move forward with the evaluation process:

- Regional Coordinator will approve the evaluation request
- Facility will be referred to the UW evaluation team and the evaluation process will begin

If the Regional Coordinator determines that the facility is not ready to move forward with the evaluation process:

- Regional Coordinator will deny the evaluation request and provide the reasons the facility was deemed not ready
- Facility is responsible for addressing reasons for denial before submitting another request for evaluation

**c. Evaluation preparation**

**i. Rating Readiness Tool**

As part of evaluation preparation, facilities will complete a Rating Readiness Tool that will be provided by their local lead agency. The tool is a checklist created by the UW that helps facilities and the evaluation team plan for a successful, efficient on-site evaluation visit. The facility's assigned TA specialist will provide on-site consultation to help facilities complete the tool during Level 2 participation. The tool collects facility information for use of the evaluation team including:

- Layout of classrooms, locations of outlets, and other relevant facility details
- Confirmation that facility has collected consent from all families (described in *Parent Consent* below)
- Location of documentation and files for rater review

Facilities may indicate on the tool that they choose to “*opt out*” of certain components of the Quality Standards. Facilities might choose this option when a component does not align with their program philosophy or if their facility does not have plans to implement the component at this time. Marking a component *opt out* means that the raters will not look for documentation for that component during the on-site rater visit. *All* components will be used to determine total facility points, regardless of whether a facility opts out, so scores may be negatively impacted by opting out.



In some cases, completion of the Rating Readiness Tool may determine that a facility is not ready to move forward with evaluation. For example, if a facility indicates that it has not collected parent consents, the Regional Coordinator will deny their request for evaluation because parent consent is required for a facility to participate in evaluation.

**d. Parent Consent**

Facilities are responsible to notify families of their Early Achievers participation in on-site evaluation. Although no individual child will be assessed, child files will be reviewed by raters to measure whether a facility meets certain Quality Standards components, such as completion of child assessment and developmental screenings. In addition, selected classrooms/family child care home will be videotaped for CLASS scoring purposes. Therefore, families are required to give consent in order for their children's experiences in the facility to be included as part of the facility rating process.

A consent form template will be provided as part of Level 2 participation that:

- Describes the purpose of Early Achievers on-site evaluation for facility rating and quality improvement
- Describes how facility information will be gathered including videotaping and review of child files
- Allows families to indicate if they are willing to participate in an interview as part of the rater information gathering process (*optional*)

Facilities are required to:

- Distribute and collect signed consent forms from parents or guardians for each child in care (family child care) or each child in a classroom serving children birth to five (centers).
- Document families that do not give consent for their children to participate
- Show evidence of signed consents during Community Liaison site visit (consent forms will stay on-site at the facility and should be sorted by classroom)
- Notify Community Liaison if there are families that did not sign consent

The raters will not review files of children without parent consent in place.

Arrangements will be made to avoid videotaping children without parent consent in place.

**e. On-site Evaluation**

The on-site evaluation includes 2 stages, each with distinct purposes, described below.

**i. Step 1: Community Liaison visit**



In order to ensure that the on-site evaluation is conducted as efficiently and unobtrusively as possible, the UW will send out a Community Liaison *prior* to the on-site rater visit. The Community Liaison is a member of the UW evaluation team but serves a different purpose than the raters. The Community Liaison's role is to support the facility and the raters to have a successful visit by:

- Explaining the on-site visit and answering any facility questions and concerns
- Reviewing the completed Rating Readiness Tool with the facility
- Confirming that all facility documentation and files are ready and in place for the raters (Note: *the Community Liaison does not approve the content of the documentation, but rather confirms and documents the availability and location of the materials so the raters are able to easily locate and review during visit.*)
- Gathering information for raters about the facility layout, including location of outlets, classroom/facility maps, and other pertinent logistical information

Upon successful completion of the visit, the Community Liaison will notify the UW raters that the facility is ready for the on-site evaluation visit.

**ii. Step 2: Rater visit**

After completion of the Community Liaison visit, UW raters will visit the facility to conduct the on-site evaluation. The visit will be unannounced and will occur within the facility-selected evaluation period as described above. Facility information, or *data*, will be collected by the raters through a variety of methods including:

- FCC/classroom observations (in-person and videotaped)
- Director/FCC/staff/parent interviews
- Review of facility records and documentation including child files

The rater visit will take place over 1-2 days depending on facility size. In child care centers, a random sample of classrooms will be chosen by the evaluation team for observation. 1/3 of center classrooms serving children ages birth to five will be observed, and the classrooms will be chosen to represent each age group. The facility will not be notified in advance about which classrooms will be observed.

**f. Rating Assignment**

**i. Creation of ratings:**

Early Achievers ratings are created based on facility data collected in the four categories of the Quality Standards: Child Outcomes; Facility Curriculum & Learning

Environment & Interactions; Professional Development & Training<sup>4</sup>; and Family Engagement & Partnership. The UW Evaluation team is responsible for compiling and analyzing facility data to determine total facility points and make a rating recommendation. The Department of Early Learning will assign the final Early Achiever rating based on UW recommendation.

**ii. Rating notification:**

Upon completion of evaluation, facilities will receive an Early Achievers Rating Report during the evaluation period following their evaluation<sup>5</sup>. For example, if a facility receives an evaluation during the period of January-March, the Rating Report will be issued during the period of April-June. Ratings Reports list overall facility rating, facility-level Environment Rating Scales (ERS) and Classroom Observation Scoring System (CLASS) assessment scores, and points earned in each Quality Standard area. Ratings Reports will be available to participants in the WELS data system via the Provider Portal. In addition, DEL will mail Early Achievers Rating Certificates to facilities.

Ratings results will help facilities identify and prioritize areas for quality improvement as they develop Quality Improvement Plans (QIP) with their coaches. Rating Levels also determine facility eligibility to receive coaching services and Quality Improvement Awards, and are tied to Quality Improvement Award amounts<sup>6</sup> (Levels 3-5 only).

**iii. Publication of ratings:**

A key goal of Early Achievers is to provide information to families about child care quality in order to help them make informed choices. Ratings for all Early Achievers facilities will be posted on the Department of Early Learning Child Care Check website. Child Care Aware of Washington will share Early Achievers participation and ratings as part of the child care referral process. In addition, facilities are encouraged

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<sup>4</sup> Staff Education information is not collected by evaluation team during on-site visit. All family child care and child care center staff education qualifications will be verified through the existing MERIT verification process. Facilities are responsible for ensuring that all staff information is complete.

<sup>5</sup> Release date of rating reports subject to change based on unexpected volumes or other factors.

<sup>6</sup> The amount for Early Achievers quality improvement awards for family home child care providers is considered a mandatory subject of bargaining with SEIU 925. The state is currently in the process of bargaining the award amounts for family home child care providers with SEIU 925. The monetary amount of each award is pending.

to display their rating certificates to show their hard work and commitment to quality to families and staff. Early Achievers Ratings will *not* be posted when:

- Facilities are in the process of completing Level 2 requirements
- Facilities have submitted Request for Evaluation Visit and are waiting for visit
- Facilities that do not choose to participate in Early Achievers are not considered Early Achievers participants. Therefore no facilities will be publicly identified as Level 1.

DEL will continue to post rating while a facility is in the process of appealing a rating. If the appeal is founded, the rating will be removed.

**iv. Length of time that rating is valid:**

Facility ratings are valid for three years from the date of issue of Early Achievers Rating Report. At the end of three years, facilities are required to participate in an on-site evaluation for re-rating. In order to maintain facility rating for the full three year period, the facility Primary QRIS Contact will be required to submit an annual facility update by accessing the Early Achievers page on his/her provider tab in MERIT to confirm that the facility is still an active participant.

During the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grant period, facilities are not able to request a re-rating before the end of three years. During the grant period, DEL and partners including the University of Washington will study rating distribution and thresholds, and make recommendations to determine criteria, process and timeline for re-ratings.

**g. Ratings Appeals**

**i. Overview:**

The appeals process for Early Achievers Ratings involves two separate pathways based on the *type* of rating information under review: **Dispute Resolution**; and **Technical Review**. The following section describes what information can be appealed, what steps a participant must take, and what DEL will do to address the appeal.

**ii. Eligibility:**

The Early Achievers Ratings appeals process applies only to Early Achievers participants that have participated in on-site evaluation and received a facility rating **on or after July 1, 2012**. Ratings received during the QRIS field test or Early Adopters year may not be appealed.

**iii. Type of Rating Appeal:**

Facilities may use one of the following pathways to appeal a rating based on the type of information under dispute:

- **Dispute Resolution:** Used to address concerns that established Early Achievers Protocols were not followed with fidelity. Examples include but are not limited to inappropriate or unprofessional actions by on-site evaluators or perceived conflict of interest between a rater and facility.
- **Technical Review:** Used when facility is able to make a case by comparing their practice at the time of evaluation to the Quality Standards that their rating should be at least one Level higher (e.g., from a Level 3 to a Level 4).

**iv. Criteria for appeal:**

Facilities may **not** initiate ratings appeals based on:

- Additional information to meet Quality Standards collected by facility *after* on-site visit
- Variability in time spent in each classroom
- Concerns about ERS and CLASS scores based on:
  - Past assessment scores were higher than Early Achievers assessment scores
  - Self-assessment scores were higher than Early Achievers assessment scores
- Components on Quality Standards that facility marked “*opt out*” on Rating Readiness Tool
- Staff education qualifications (all MERIT- related appeals are handled separately through existing MERIT appeals processes)
- Date/time of visit if visit occurred during facility-requested evaluation window (upon Regional Coordinator approval of evaluation request) & block-out dates. Visits are rescheduled only in the case of facility emergency/natural disaster
- Selection of classrooms for observations
- Typical staff not present during visit
- Occurrence of any evaluation processes outlined in the Early Achievers Participation Agreement
- Facilities with licenses that are on probation, suspended or revoked may not appeal rating

**v. How to initiate a rating appeal:**

Facilities that wish to appeal a rating follow the steps outlined below depending on type of rating appeal.

**Rating Dispute Resolution:** Facility must complete the following steps **within 10 business days of on-site evaluation visit:**

1. Facility Primary QRIS Contact reports concern during follow-up evaluation survey from Community Liaison.
2. Facility Primary QRIS Contact communicates specific concerns with Regional Coordinator. The Regional Coordinator will explain the Early Achievers Evaluation process to address *general* questions about on-site evaluation.
3. If the facility still has concerns, the facility Primary QRIS Contact will complete the DEL *Early Achievers Rating Appeal* form (available upon request) and indicate that the facility wants to pursue a **Rating Dispute Resolution**.
4. *Early Achievers Rating Appeal* form must include detailed **written** documentation and evidence about the concern, including date of communication with Regional Coordinator.
5. Primary QRIS Contact submits completed form to DEL QRIS Program Manager.

**Rating Technical Review:** Facility must complete the following steps **within 10 business days of receipt of Facility Rating Report:**

1. Facility Primary QRIS Contact communicates concerns with Regional Coordinator. The Regional Coordinator will review the Early Achievers Standards with the facility to address any misunderstandings or questions about *general* ratings calculations.
2. If the facility still has concerns, the facility Primary QRIS Contact will complete the DEL *Early Achievers Rating Appeal* form (available upon request) and indicate that the facility wants to pursue **Rating Technical Review**.
3. *Early Achievers Rating Appeal* form must include detailed **written** information that provides rationale and specific examples and documentation of:
  - How facility practices at the time of on-site evaluation met specific quality standards component points **AND**
  - How total points would change assigned facility rating by at least one level, i.e. Level 3 to Level 4.

Documentation must also include date of communication with Regional Coordinator.

5. Primary QRIS Contact submits form to DEL QRIS Program Manager.

vi. **DEL's Rating Appeal Resolution Process:**

1. The DEL QRIS Manager reviews facility-completed *Early Achievers Rating Appeal* form and may request additional documentation from facility and/or partners including the UW Evaluation Team and facility's Regional Coordinator/local lead staff.
2. The QRIS Manager makes initial decision within 10 business days of receiving all necessary documents and information to make decision; sends written notification of decision to facility.
3. If facility disagrees with decision, facility must respond in writing within 10 business days from date of DEL decision.
4. The QRIS Manager summarizes facility appeal and initial DEL decision and submits to the QRIS Administrator and the DEL Director of Outcomes and Accountability for review within 10 business days.
5. DEL notifies facility of final decision in writing.
6. **If rating appeal is granted**, the following actions will occur depending on the nature of the appeal:
  - If it is determined that an error was made in calculation or data entry that does not require a re-rating, the scores will be adjusted to reflect the corrected error and the facility will be issued an updated Early Achievers Rating Report.
  - If it is determined that a re-rating may be necessary, the DEL QRIS Manager will request that the UW Evaluation Team rescore the facility, blind to the original scores. If there is less than 80% agreement between the two scores across all indicators and the differences may result in a different rating Level, an observation for rating will be conducted again.
    - In the case that the appeal outcome requires a re-rating, DEL will contact the UW Evaluation Team to initiate an on-site evaluation for a re-rating.
    - While facility is in process of re-rating, no facility rating information will be publically posted on DEL's website.
  - Upon completion of re-rating or adjustment of an Early Achievers Rating Report, updated facility rating information will be posted on DEL's Child Care Aware website. DEL will also notify Child Care Aware of Washington and provide them with updated rating information.
7. **If appeal is denied:**

- Facility will be notified in writing of decision including information about why the appeal was denied. Facility rating will remain valid for three years from the date rating was issued.

## **VIII. Participation Requirements & Expectations**

The following section details facility responsibilities and expectations of participation. In addition, facilities should refer to the Early Achievers Participation Agreement for program participation expectations.

### **a. Recordkeeping**

The following records must be kept on-site by facilities:

- All signed agreements including the Early Achievers Participation Agreement and the coach/participant contract provided by coach
- All receipts, records, and documentation of use of Quality Improvement Awards (must be kept on-site for seven years)
- All parent/caregiver consents for children to participate in evaluation

DEL and the local lead agency reserve the right to request and review records pertaining to participation in order to verify enrollment, use of funds, or adherence to the Operating Guidelines at any time.

### **b. Notification Requirements**

Facilities are required to notify local lead agency of significant changes that affect participation within seven business days including but not limited to:

- Address change
- Facility closure
- Change in licensing status: suspension, probation or revocation
- Low enrollment: fewer than four children enrolled
- Voluntary withdrawal from Early Achievers
- Change in Primary QRIS Contact

### **c. Information Sharing**

The Department of Early Learning (DEL) and the University of Washington are subject to chapter 42.56 RCW, the Public Records Act. Early Achievers Facility records in the possession of DEL or the UW may also be subject to disclosure under chapter 42.56 RCW.

### **d. Internet Usage/Security**

Participation in MERIT and the WELS Provider Portal is required as part of Early Achievers participation. These web-based data systems are secure and require user



login to access the information. All data entered in MERIT and WELS can be accessed by DEL, Child Care Aware of Washington, and UW for the purpose of supporting quality improvement work and the long-term evaluation of the Early Achievers program. Additionally, all information entered into the data systems are subject to public disclosure requests as described above in *Information Sharing*.

e. **Conflict of Interest**

Early Achievers participants may not also be employed as an Early Achievers coach, Regional Coordinator, or a member of the UW Evaluation team during their participation in Early Achievers.

f. **Criteria for Termination**

The local lead agency reserves the right to initiate termination from Early Achievers process at any time if a facility fails to meet any of the expectations outlined in the Early Achievers Participation Agreement and the Early Achievers Operating Guidelines.

Criteria for termination include:

- Failure to maintain good standing with licensing defined as having an active license that is **not** suspended, revoked or on probation
- Changes in facility licensed capacity: facility no longer licensed to serve children birth to five
- Changes in facility enrollment: no children ages birth to age 5 enrolled for 60 calendar days
- Provision of false information on Early Achievers application or any participation documents
- Failure to complete Early Achievers Level 2 participation requirements within allowed timeframe
- Failure to participate in on-site evaluation after submission of Request for Evaluation
- Failure to meet Early Achievers participation expectations including failure to return calls, keep appointments, and submit required paperwork including Quality Improvement Award Funds Use report
- Failure to fully participate in Early Achievers coaching services, including participation in on-site coaching and creation of a Quality Improvement Plan based on evaluation data and Early Achievers Quality Standards
- Fraudulent use of Quality Improvement Award funds
- Failure to maintain all records, receipts and documentation of use of Quality Improvement Awards on-site for seven years



- Failure to report changes to local lead agency that may render facility ineligible for Early Achievers participation
- Failure to adhere to professionalism in conduct and behavior with coaches, regional coordinators, trainers and DEL staff
- Facility is unwilling to adhere to changes made to the Early Achievers Operating Guidelines or administrative and statutory guidelines issued by any state, federal or local government agency

g. **Procedure for Termination**

1. In the event that a facility has not met the requirements outlined in the Early Achievers Participation Agreement or the Operating Guidelines, or if the facility has committed any acts that may result in Early Achievers termination, the local lead agency shall notify the facility in writing of the need to take corrective action. The local lead agency shall notify DEL that the facility has been notified of corrective action. **Please note:** any termination procedures due to facility licensing status will be addressed by DEL as outlined in *Eligibility: How Licensing Status affects registration and participation* (Section 3: part c).
2. The facility has 30 days to comply with the request for corrective action. During the 30 day review process, the local lead agency may request additional documentation from the facility and from partners including but not limited to facility coach.
3. The local lead agency will review facility participation information, including steps that the facility has taken to remedy the issue, in order to determine if there is sufficient evidence that the facility has violated any aspect of Early Achievers participation or has otherwise acted in a way that is unethical to warrant termination of participation. The local lead agency reserves the right to suspend all or part of Early Achievers activities during the review process.
4. The local lead agency will determine if the facility will be terminated from Early Achievers or allowed to continue as an Early Achievers participant within 10 business days of receiving all necessary documentation to make a final decision. The local lead agency will notify DEL of decision to terminate: DEL will approve all final decisions about facility termination from Early Achievers.
5. The local lead agency will notify the facility of final decision within 5 business days of decision.

h. **Obligations of Participants Upon Termination or Withdrawal from Early Achievers**

Facilities that are terminated or voluntarily withdraw from Early Achievers must:

- Provide local lead agency with all outstanding reports and participation information
- Facilities that are no longer Early Achievers participants should not display their Early Achiever Rating or otherwise use their rating for marketing purposes.

In the event of termination, the facility may be liable for damages as authorized by law including, but not limited to, Quality Improvement funds paid to the facility.

i. **Reapplication to Early Achievers**

This section addresses the steps that a facility must take to reapply for Early Achievers after:

- Termination from Early Achievers
  - Voluntary withdrawal from Early Achievers
1. Facilities must wait 12 months from date of termination<sup>7</sup> or the date of voluntary withdrawal from Early Achievers before reapplication to Early Achievers.
  2. After 12 months, facilities interested in reapplication are required to submit written documentation using a DEL approved template to the DEL QRIS Program Manager stating how issues that resulted in termination or withdrawal have been resolved and how facility is prepared for successful future participation. Note: facilities that reapply to Early Achievers are subject to re-ratings timeline outlined in *Evaluation and Rating: Rating Assignment* (Section 7: part f).
  3. The DEL QRIS Program Manager will convene the DEL QRIS Review Team who will review the cause of facility termination or withdrawal, documentation submitted by facility, and information from partners including Regional Coordinators and local lead agencies if applicable to make a final decision about facility eligibility for participation. DEL may request additional information from the facility during review process. In the case that a facility was terminated due to licensing suspension, revocation, or probation, DEL will consult with the Regional Administrator for recommendations before making final decision.

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<sup>7</sup> Facilities terminated during the QRIS Test or Early Adopter year (2009-2012) must wait until July 1, 2013 before submitting an application to Early Achievers. Facilities must provide a written letter to DEL stating how issues that resulted in termination from the field test or Early Adopters have been resolved and how facility is prepared to successfully participate. DEL may request additional information from the facility and from partners including Regional Coordinator and licensors before accepting facility as applicant. In the case that a facility was terminated due to licensing suspension or revocation, or probation, DEL will consult a licensor. DEL reserves the right to make final decision about application after termination from field test or Early Adopters.



4. DEL will notify facility of final decision in writing within 10 business days of receiving of all necessary documentation to make decision.
5. DEL reserves the right to make final decision about reapplication after termination or voluntary withdrawal.

## IX. Glossary of Terms

<b>Child Care Aware of Washington</b>	<b>Child Care Aware of Washington</b> (formerly known as <i>The Washington State Child Care Resource &amp; Referral Network</i> ) is the lead agency for coordinating improvement activities including coaching, technical assistance, professional development and training.
<b>Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)</b>	<b>CLASS</b> is an observation-based assessment tool that measures how teachers/providers interact with children to create supportive, nurturing relationships, enhance learning, and provide instruction. <b>CLASS</b> looks at interactions in three domains: Emotional Support; Classroom Organization; and Instructional Support. The <b>CLASS</b> will be conducted (through videotape) in classrooms and family child care homes by UW as part of the facility on-site evaluation for rating. Facility <b>CLASS</b> scores make up 40% of the total Early Achievers Quality Standards points.
<b>Coach</b>	<p>All Level 3-5 facilities will be assigned a <b>coach</b> who will work with them to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify goals based on evaluation data and Early Achievers Quality Standards</li> <li>• Make plans to achieve goals</li> <li>• Access resources</li> <li>• Implement quality improvements</li> <li>• Navigate Early Achievers</li> </ul> <p><b>Coaches</b> are highly trained early learning professionals with experience and education in early childhood education, and participate in ongoing professional development and consultation with the University of Washington</p>
<b>The Department of Early Learning (DEL)</b>	The Department of Early Learning is a state agency dedicated to helping ensure our state offers world-class, developmentally and culturally appropriate early learning opportunities for all of Washington's youngest learners, so each child enters kindergarten with a solid foundation for success in school and life. Washington's children realize their full potential. <b>DEL</b> is the lead administrative agency for Early Achievers.

<b>Early Achievers</b>	<p>Early Achievers is Washington’s QRIS, and is a voluntary program designed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support child care providers to provide high-quality care by providing resources including training, coaching and incentives</li> <li>• Help parents and caregivers find high-quality child care and early learning programs that fit their needs</li> <li>• Ensure that children have high-quality early learning experiences that help them develop the skills they need to be successful in school and life</li> </ul>
<b>Environment Rating Scales (ERS)</b>	<p>The <b>ERS</b> is an observation-based assessment that measures classroom/family child care environment quality in the following categories: Space and Furnishings; Personal Care Routines; Language and Reasoning/Listening and Talking; Activities; Interactions; Program Structure; and Parents and Staff. The <b>ERS</b> will be conducted in classrooms and family child care homes by UW as part of the facility on-site evaluation for rating. Facility <b>ERS</b> scores make up 15% of the total Early Achievers Quality Standards points.</p>
<b>Facility</b>	<p>In this document, <b>facility</b> refers to the participating child care center or family child care home.</p>
<b>MERIT</b>	<p>MERIT (Washington’s Managed Education and Registry Information Tool) is used to document and recognize the professional achievements of early care and education and school age professionals. Facilities use MERIT to access and complete the Early Achievers Registration and Application for Level 2. MERIT is the source of evidence during evaluation for staff education qualifications for facility Professional Development &amp; Training Standard points. Use of MERIT is a requirement for Early Achievers Participation.</p>
<b>Minimum thresholds</b>	<p>A facility must achieve designated minimum CLASS and ERS scores in order to achieve a rating of Level 3, regardless of total facility points earned. Each assessed classroom/family child care home must score at least a 2 on Instructional Support in the CLASS, a 3.5 on Emotional Support and Classroom Organization, and a 4 on the ERS. These scores, or <b>minimum thresholds</b> represent the foundational level of quality that all facilities must have in order to be rated Levels 3-5. Facilities that do not meet the minimum thresholds will receive a rating of Level 2.</p>

<b>On-site evaluation</b>	Facilities participate in on-site evaluation conducted by the University of Washington in order to earn a facility rating. On-site evaluation includes ERS and CLASS observations, review of records and documentation, and staff interviews.
<b>Primary QRIS Contact</b>	The <b>Primary QRIS Contact</b> is the facility child care center director or family child care provider who is responsible for oversight and completion of all Level 2 activities.
<b>Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)</b>	All Level 3-5 facilities will create a <b>Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)</b> in partnership with their coaches based on facility evaluation results, ERS and CLASS scores, components of the Quality Standards, and overall facility rating. The <b>QIP</b> is a plan that includes goals, action steps to achieve goals, timelines and resources needed.
<b>Quality Standards</b>	The Early Achievers <b>Quality Standards</b> is a comprehensive, research-based framework to support positive outcomes in early learning settings. There are four <b>Quality Standard</b> Areas: Child Outcomes; Curriculum & Learning Environment & Interactions; Professional Development & Training; and Family Engagement & Partnership. Each Quality Standard area is worth a set number of points. Facility ratings are based on total points earned during evaluation on the Quality Standards.
<b>Secondary QRIS Contact</b>	Facilities may appointment a <b>Secondary QRIS Contact</b> to participate in the Professional Training Series on behalf of the Primary QRIS Contact. Designation of a Secondary QRIS Contact is optional.
<b>Technical Assistance (TA) specialist</b>	All facilities in Level 2 will be assigned a <b>Technical Assistance (TA) specialist</b> through the their local lead agency who will work with the program to develop a work plan and timeline for completion of Level 2 activities and connect them to resources that will help them meet the quality standards.
<b>University of Washington (UW)</b>	<b>The University of Washington (UW)</b> is the lead agency for evaluation, assessment and rating assignment. Raters from UW conduct facility on-site evaluation visits. UW is also responsible for the development of the Early Achievers Coach Framework.

### WELS data system

WELS is a web-based early learning data system that will be used by Early Achievers partners including DEL, UW and Child Care Aware/local resource and referral agencies to track and maintain data including facility participation, evaluation information, and quality improvement progress. Facilities will use the WELS “Provider Portal” to view their QIP, track their progress, and access resources to support their goals





# EARLY ACHIEVERS, Washington's Quality Rating and Improvement System Standards

*A Framework to Support Positive Child Outcomes*

## LEVEL ONE: Licensing or Certification

Facility must be currently licensed or have recognized, approved certification (Military, Head Start, ECEAP, Tribal).

## LEVEL TWO: Professional Growth and Facility Management

Facility must meet all Level One requirements in order to register for Level Two.

### LEVEL TWO APPLICATION PROCESS

(must complete prior to beginning Level Two Activities)

- ▶ Attend Early Achievers Orientation\*.
- ▶ Complete and submit Early Achievers Registration.

### LEVEL TWO ACTIVITIES

#### Documentation

- ▶ Complete Facility Profile in MERIT Early Achievers Application for Level 2.
- ▶ Complete and submit QRIS Self-assessment.
  - ▶ Environment Rating Scale (ERS)
  - ▶ State Standards

#### Professional Training Series (director/owner/program supervisor)

- ▶ Complete QRIS Professional Training Series:
  - ▶ Washington State Early Learning and Development Guidelines
  - ▶ Washington State Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals
  - ▶ Introduction to Cultural Competence
  - ▶ Strengthening Families
  - ▶ Introduction to the Environment Rating Scales (ERS) and Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)
  - ▶ School Readiness

### REQUIREMENTS TO ACHIEVE LEVEL TWO RATING\*\*

- ▶ Ensure all facility staff caring for children have an active 'Professional Record' in MERIT.
- ▶ Complete and submit Early Achievers Application for Level 2 within one year.
- ▶ Must be fully licensed (no initial licenses).
- ▶ Cannot be on suspension, revocation, or probation.



\*Early Achievers Orientation must be completed prior to beginning the Professional Training Series. The ERS/CLASS Overview must be taken prior to completing the QRIS Self-assessment

\*\*Facility must meet all of the below requirements and have been awarded a Level 2 rating prior to applying for a Level 3 to 5 rating.

## LEVELS THREE, FOUR, & FIVE: Points Accumulation

### LEVEL FIVE

91-100 points

### LEVEL FOUR

70-90 points

### LEVEL THREE

30-69 points

### LEVEL TWO

Professional  
Growth  
and Facility  
Management

### LEVEL ONE

Licensing or  
Certification

Levels 3 to 5 are based on points. Your total rating is determined by the number of points you earn during an independent evaluation. Each assessed classroom must score at least a 2 on Instructional Support in the CLASS, a 3.5 on Emotional Support and Organization in the CLASS and a 4 on the ERS to achieve a Level 3 to 5 rating. Facilities that do not meet these minimum thresholds will receive a Level 2 rating. For assessment purposes, family home child care must serve a minimum of 4 children.

### POINTS AWARDED FOR THESE AREAS:

- ▶ Child Outcomes
- ▶ Facility Curriculum & Learning Environment & Interactions
- ▶ Professional Development & Training
- ▶ Family Engagement & Partnership

Your overall points will determine your final rating. Degrees and credentials must be verified in MERIT in order to earn professional development points. The points are:

Child Outcomes	<b>+10 points</b>
Facility Curriculum and Learning Environment and Interactions (70 points total)	
Classroom/FCC Home Environment (CLASS/ERS)	<b>+55 points</b>
Curriculum, Learning and Assessment	<b>+15 points</b>
Professional Development and Training	<b>+10 points</b>
Family Engagement and Partnership	<b>+10 points</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>100 points</b>



# POINTS ACCUMULATION

## Child Outcomes / 10 points

Component	Sub-Component One	Sub-Component Two	Total Points
Developmental screening is conducted within 90 days of enrollment and results are shared with parents	Records Review (1 point)		1 point
Daily Individual Child Experience of Quality	Engagement (1 point)	Language (1 point)	2 points
Ongoing assessment of children's strengths and needs to monitor progress (e.g., child portfolio/ work sampling assessments) and inform instruction	Records Review (1 point)	Focal Child Analysis (1 point)	2 points
Share individualized child data with parents			1 point
Evidence of family engagement, data sharing, and transition supports for individual children (as measured by Focal Child)			1 point
Use of WaKIDS Assessment Tool <u>or</u> demonstration/ documentation of alignment to WaKIDS Assessment process			1 point
Individualized Instruction for all children			1 point
Periodic review and use of child assessment data for continuous program improvement (e.g. analyze group patterns and behaviors)			1 point

## Facility Curriculum and Learning Environment / 70 points

### Classroom/FCC Home Environment / 55 Points

Scoring Guide	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Instructional Support/Engaged Support for Learning*	2 to 3.4 (10 points)	3.5 to 4.4 (15 points)	4.5 & higher (20 points)
Emotional Support & Classroom Organization/Emotional and Behavioral Support**	3.5 to 4.9 (10 points)	5.0 to 5.9 (15 points)	6.0 & higher (20 points)
ERS***	4 (5 points)	5 (10 points)	6 (15 points)

As of May 2012, the Toddler CLASS domain formerly called Instructional Support was renamed “Engaged Support for Learning,” and the Toddler CLASS domains formerly called Emotional Support and Classroom Organization were renamed “Emotional and Behavioral Support.”

\* No one classroom can score below a 2 to receive a rating of 3 or above

\*\* No one classroom can score below a 3.5 to receive a rating of 3 or above

\*\*\* No one classroom can score below a 4 to receive a rating of 3 or above

### Curriculum and Staff Supports / 15 points

Component	Sub-Component One	Sub-Component Two	Total Points
Curriculum Profile	Show evidence of Program Curriculum Philosophy (1 point)	Demonstrate alignment with Washington State Early Learning and Development Guidelines (2 point)	3 points
Training	Lead Teaching Staff* or FCC Owner trained on Program Curriculum Philosophy (2 points)	Lead Teaching Staff* or FCC Owner trained on Washington State Early Learning and Development Guidelines (3 points)	5 points
Ongoing mentoring of teaching staff** to support improvement in curriculum and teacher child interactions			3 points
Dedicated time for teaching staff** planning time on a weekly basis			2 points
Dedicated time for teaching staff** to engage in reflective practice with peer group on a monthly basis			2 points

\* Includes family child care assistants

\*\* Includes FCC primary educator/care provider

## Professional Development and Training Standard Area / 10 points

### Center Director

AA in ECE or related field	Level 3 of the Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals	1 point
BA in ECE or related field	Level 4 of the Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals	2 points
MA in ECE or related field	Level 5 of the Core Competencies for Early Care	4 points

### Center Designated Lead Teaching Staff

(at least one staff person per classroom must be designated lead)

25% have CDA or One Year Certificate of Proficiency (45 credits) or higher	Level 2 of the Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals	1 point
25% have AA or higher in ECE or related field	Level 3 of the Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals	2 points
25% have BA or higher in ECE or related field	Level 4 of the Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals	3 points

### Center - All Other Teaching Staff (assistants and aides)

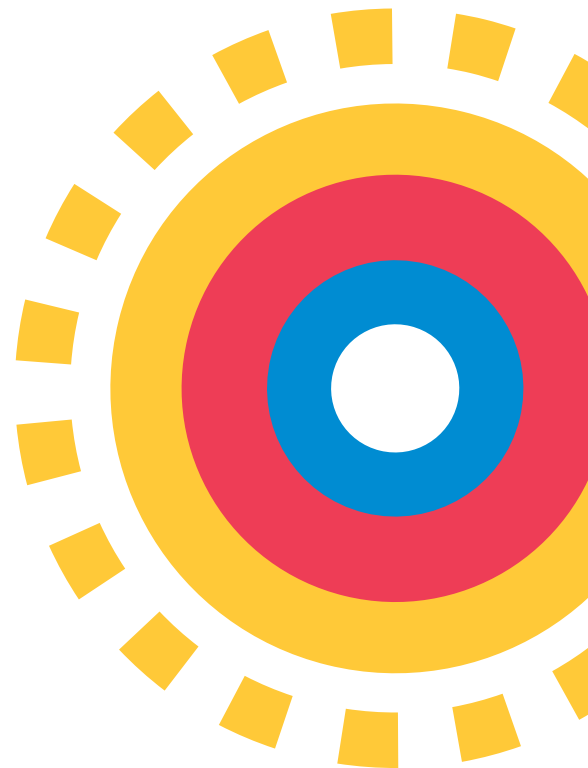
25% have CDA or One Year Certificate of Proficiency (45 credits) or higher	Level 2 of the Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals	1 point
50% have CDA or One Year Certificate of Proficiency (45 credits) or higher	Level 2 of the Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals	2 points
25% have AA or higher in ECE or related field	Level 3 of the Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals	3 points

### Family Child Care Provider or Primary Worker

CDA or One Year Certificate of Proficiency (45 credits in ECE)	Level 2 of the Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals	3 points
AA in ECE or related field	Level 3 of the Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals	5 points
BA in ECE or related field	Level 4 of the Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals	7 points
MA in ECE or related field	Level 5 of the Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals	10 points

## Family Engagement and Partnership / 10 points

Component	Total Points
Complete modified Strengthening Families Self-assessment (Director/Owner)	1 point
Develop a Plan of Action based on Strengthening Families Self-assessment	1 point
Provide evidence of continuous feedback and improvement (Plan of Action)	1 point
Have a parenting support and education program in place (e.g. Incredible Years, Triple P Parenting, CSEFEL Parenting Modules, Parents as Teachers etc.)	1 point
Provide information about community based programs available for parents in languages represented in the facility (e.g. community mental health, child nutrition, physical fitness, food banks, Child Find, medical/dental resources etc.)	1 point
Evidence of transition plans/policies in place for changes in settings and providers	3 points
Partner with parents to determine perception of child strengths and needs	2 points







Early Achievers promotes the connection between group instruction and the needs of individual children.

